SUNSHINE BOOKS
The Panda
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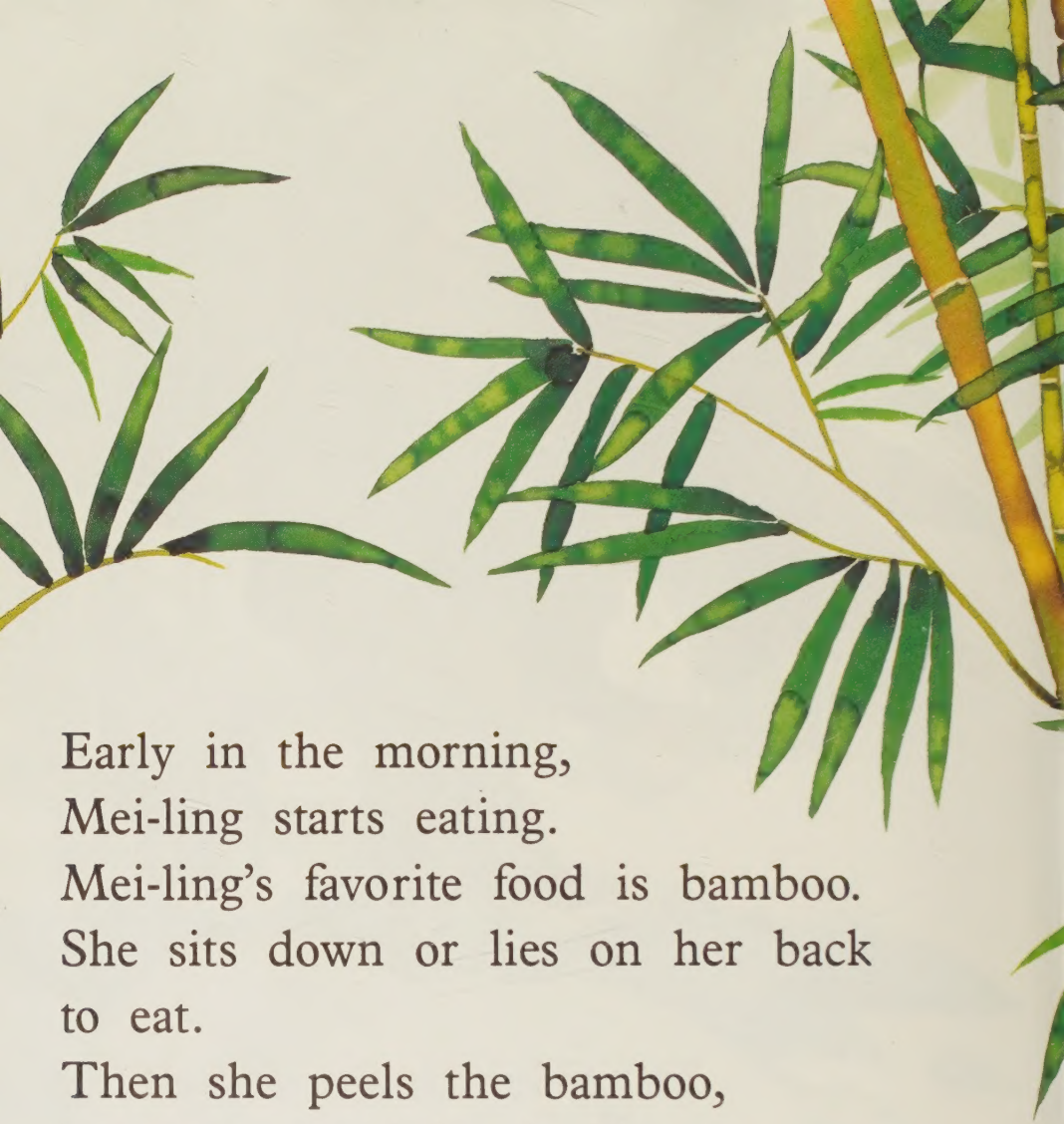
Illustrations by Robert Masheris

Mei-ling is a panda.
She lives in China on mountains covered with bamboo forests.
It is cold there, and snow covers the ground.
It rains a lot, too.

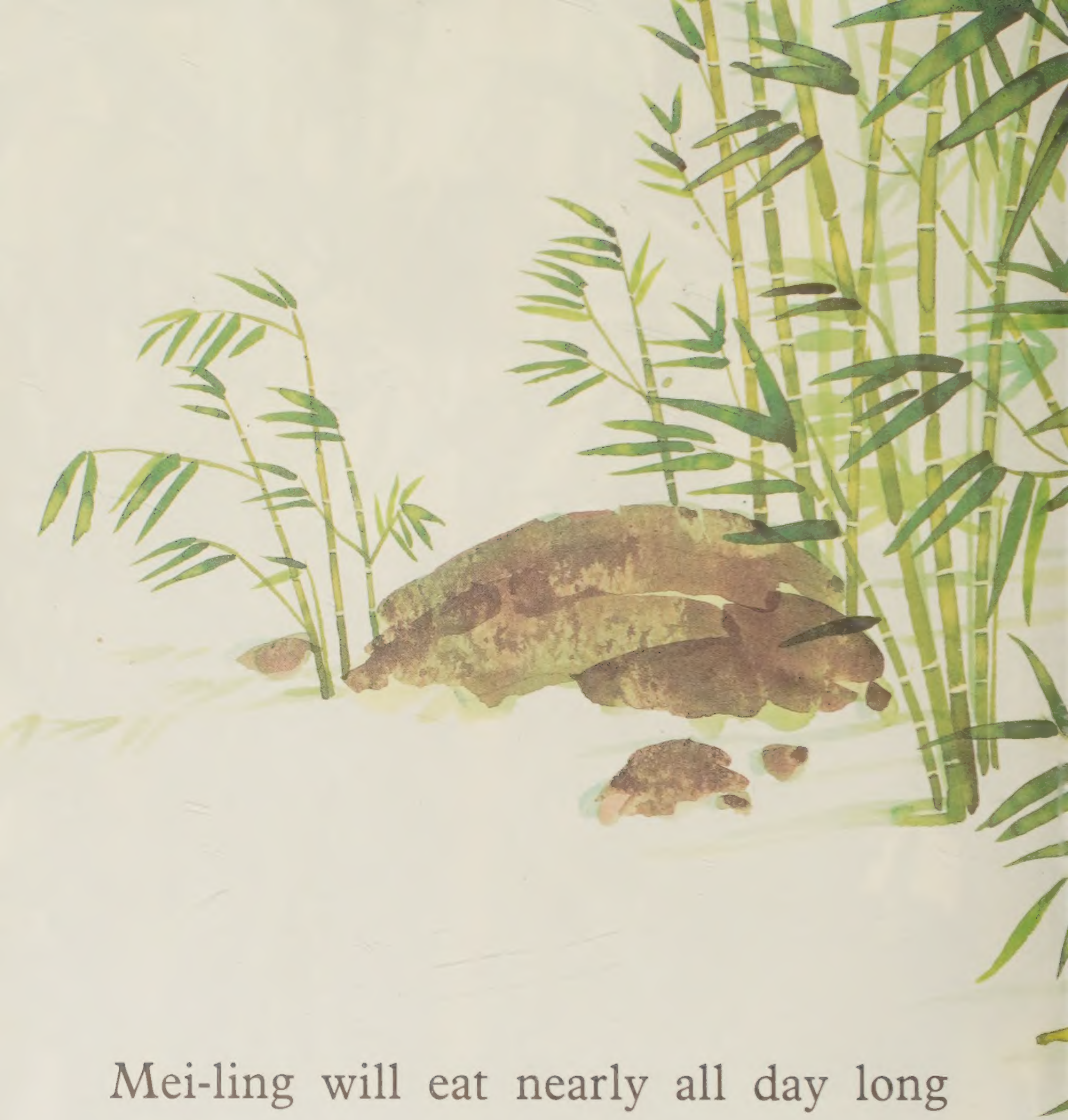
Mei-ling looks just like any panda does.
She has two black eye-patches
and a round, white head.
She has a black band around her white,
round body, and four black feet.

Mei-ling is sometimes called
a panda bear.
But pandas are not bears like brown bears
or polar bears.
They have their own family.
Pandas are pandas.



Early in the morning,
Mei-ling starts eating.
Mei-ling's favorite food is bamboo.
She sits down or lies on her back
to eat.
Then she peels the bamboo,
to get at the juicy inside.

Mei-ling would like to eat small animals.
But pandas move too slowly,
and the animals mostly escape.

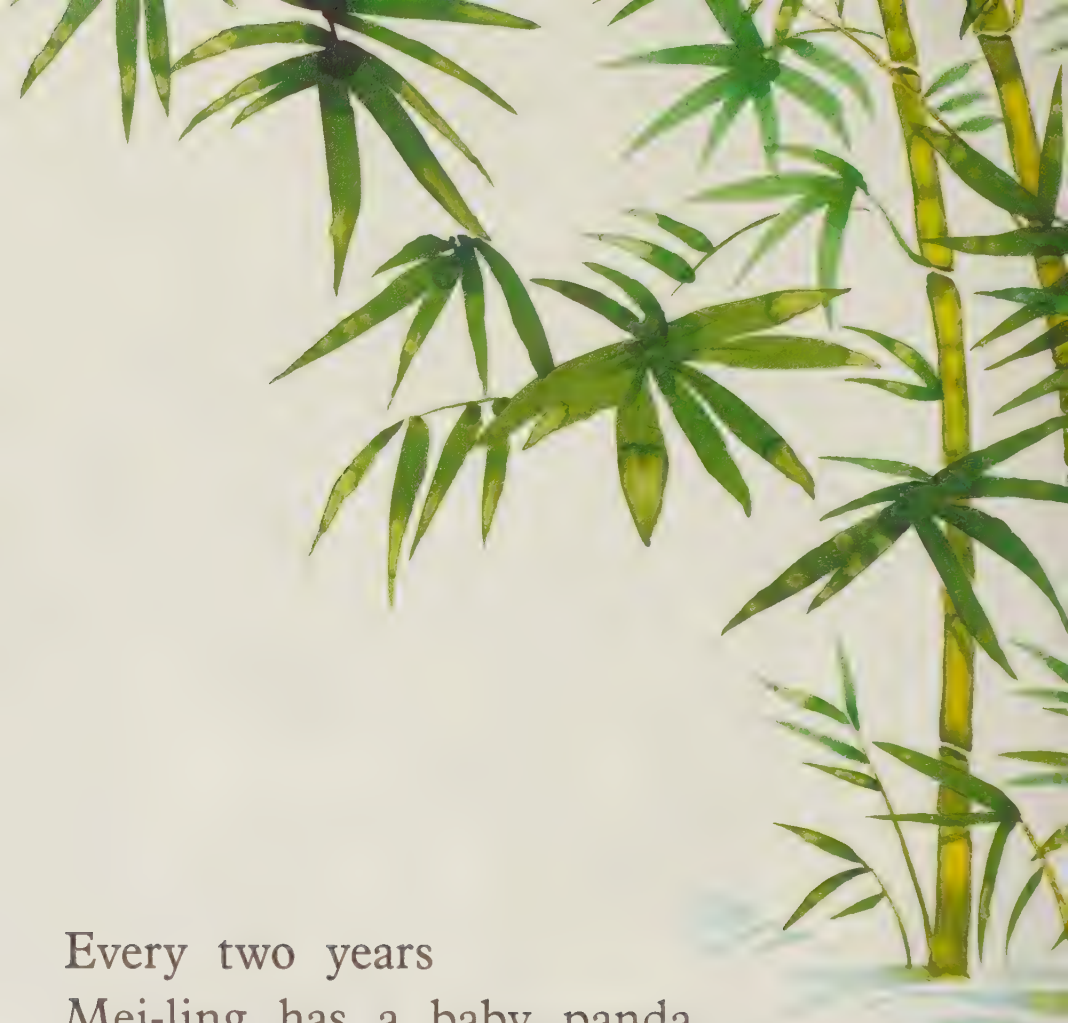


Mei-ling will eat nearly all day long
until she is tired.
Then she lies down in the snow.
It is a good thing
she has a thick fur coat
to keep her warm.

Mei-ling lives alone.
If another panda comes near,
she will chase it away.
She growls and barks
to tell other pandas to keep away.

Other animals live in the mountains
with Mei-ling and the other pandas.
There are wild dogs, leopards,
deer, golden monkeys,
lynxes and many birds.
Mei-ling is frightened of wild dogs.
She knows they will attack her.

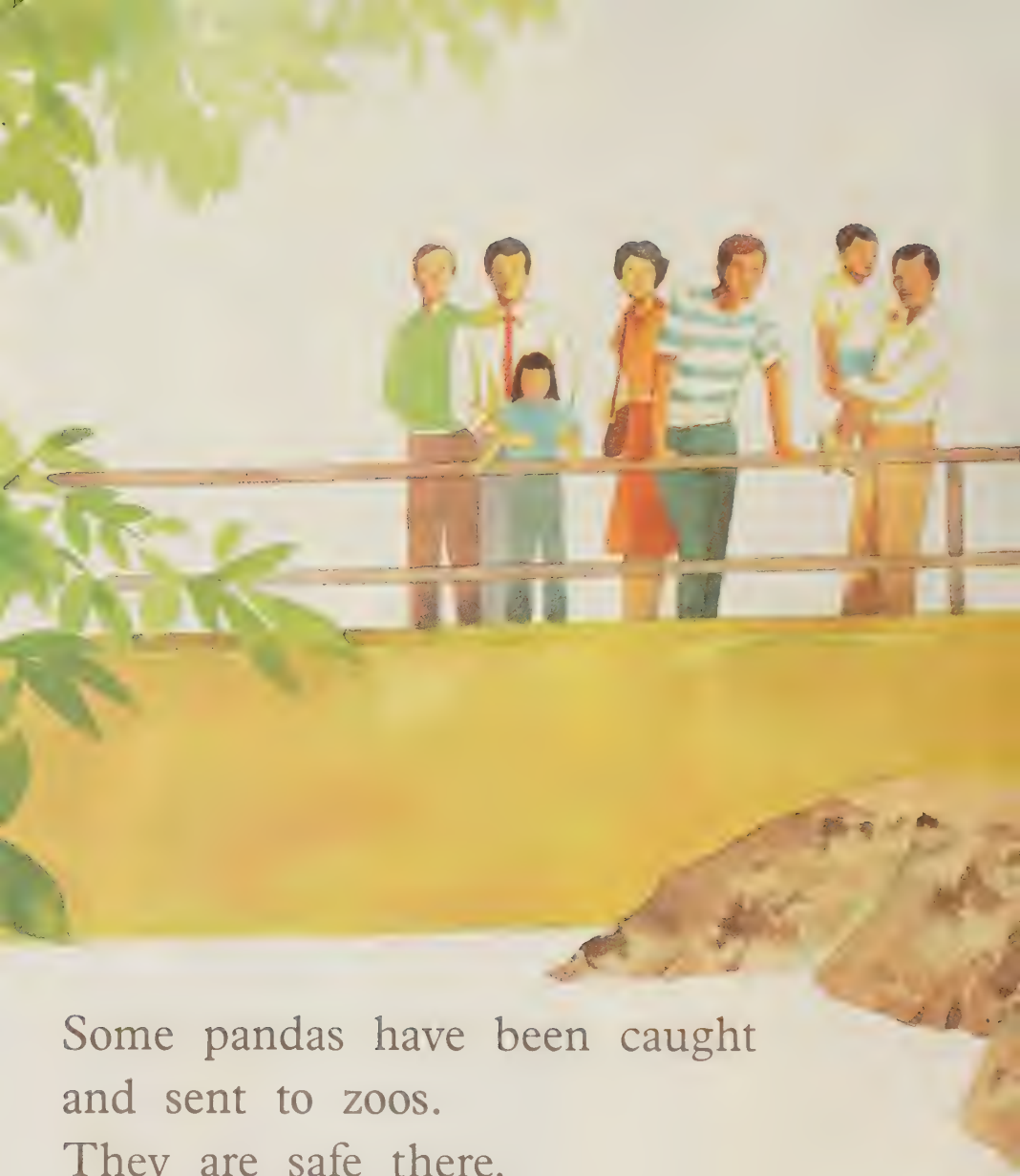
Sometimes, people come to look
at Mei-ling.
They come to study her –
to find out what she does all day.
Then, Mei-ling hides.
She is hard to see in the snow
and the dark bamboo forest.
(She is also the right shape
to run away, through and under
the bamboo.)



Every two years
Mei-ling has a baby panda.
Sometimes she has two babies,
but one nearly always dies.
Mei-ling can only look after
one baby at a time.
But she looks after that baby very well.
She keeps it warm and safe.

Once, Mei-ling was caught in a cage. Some men put a collar with a radio in it around her neck and then let her go.

The men always knew where to find her. They just listened to the radio signal and went to the right spot.



Some pandas have been caught
and sent to zoos.
They are safe there.
But Mei-ling is safe
in the mountains, too.
No one is allowed to kill pandas any more.

Mei-ling still lives in the bamboo forests.
As long as she has bamboo to eat,
she will survive.

LEVEL

THREE

It's Not the Same
Whose Shoes?
Did You Know?
The Panda
Double Trouble
Blackbirds
Animal Pets
Volcanoes

The Wright Group

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